



# PLYMOUTH POLICY BOOK

AS APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

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## 200.Membership

### 220.Members

#### 220.2.Inactive Status

##### 220.2.1.Determining Inactive Member Status

Bylaws define “inactive status” and “participates actively in the life of Plymouth.” Those definitions are incorporated into this policy.

##### **A.Placing a Member on Inactive Status**

- 1)The Senior Pastor or designee working with the Membership Standing Ministry shall annually review the membership roll to determine if there are members who meet the definition of inactive status.
- 2)Members meeting the definition of inactive status shall be contacted to determine if they are interested in remaining listed as members. Great leniency and grace shall be given. Their request shall be honored.
- 3)If a member cannot be contacted or states that they no longer wish to be a member, they will be placed on the Archival Roll.
- 4)If the member does not wish to terminate their membership, they shall be offered to be placed on inactive status. They shall be told this status entails neither the rights nor the responsibilities of membership.

##### **B.Removing a Member from Inactive Status**

A request to be removed from inactive status shall be given to the Senior Pastor or designee for consideration, stating the inactive member's intention to participate actively in the life of Plymouth. The Senior Pastor shall determine the best means to reactivate the membership.

## 230.Termination of Membership

#### 230.3.Removal

##### 230.3.1.Removing the Membership of a Member

- 1)Council may remove the membership of members on inactive status for at least two years.
- 2)Before removal, the Senior Pastor or designee, working with the Membership Standing Ministry, shall contact a member on inactive status periodically to determine the member's interest in remaining on inactive status. If the inactive member requests to remain on inactive status, the request shall be honored.
- 3)If a member on inactive status for at least two years cannot be reached after attempts to contact them, the Senior Pastor or designee shall place their name on a list to present to Council for its consideration.
- 4)Council shall review the list and consider each individual as to whether to retain them on inactive status or to remove their membership.
- 5)Council shall direct the Senior Pastor or designee to place the name on the Archival Roll of any former member whose membership they have voted to remove.
- 6)The Bylaws allow that someone who has been placed on the Archival Roll may again become a member by either Letter of Transfer or Reaffirmation of Faith.

## 500.Governance

### 510.Officers

#### 510.6.Treasurer

##### 510.6.1.Treasurer Duties

###### The Treasurer shall:

- 1)Disburse the funds of the Church as may be ordered by Council;
- 2)Give an account to Council of all the Treasurer's transactions on a regular basis or as requested by Council;
- 3)Give an account of the financial condition of the Church on a regular basis or as requested by Council;
- 4)Be adequately bonded; and
- 5)Receive disbursements from the Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund and deposit the funds into accounts in such a manner so as to honor the donors' intent.

##### 510.6.2.Deputy Treasurer

The Treasurer may recommend a Deputy Treasurer to be appointed by Council. The duty of the Deputy Treasurer is to assist carrying out the duties of the office of Treasurer. The Deputy Treasurer is not a member of Council. The Deputy Treasure may serve up to six consecutive years before a break of at least one year.

##### 510.6.3.Fiscal Year

The fiscal year is the calendar year although the Treasurer may close the books at such time as directed by Council.

##### 510.6.4.Gift Acceptance

###### 1.General

###### A.Purpose

Plymouth encourages the solicitation and acceptance of gifts to enable Plymouth to fulfill its mission:

"In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of all."

###### B.Gift Definition

- 1)A gift is any contribution to Plymouth except:

- a)Planned receipts in the annual budget;
- b)Special offerings or collections initiated by Council or the Senior Pastor; or
- c)Events or fundraisers for Plymouth and its programming.

###### C.Acceptable Gifts

- 1)The following gifts are acceptable but not intended to represent an exclusive list of acceptable gifts:

- a)Cash or Cash Equivalent;
- b)Securities;
- c)Remainder Interests in Property;
- d)Oil, Gas, and Mineral Interests;
- e)Life Insurance;
- f)Charitable Gift Annuities;
- g)Charitable Remainder Trusts;
- h)Charitable Lead Trusts;
- i)Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations;
- j)Bequests;
- k)Life Insurance Beneficiary Designations.

2)Donors should consult Plymouth and its Gift Guidelines for specific categories of gifts.

#### **D.Administration**

- 1)Gifts may be solicited, received, or both from any entity, including but not limited to individuals, corporations, foundations, and federal, state, and local governments. Such gifts are deemed accepted upon deposit unless action to the contrary is taken by or on behalf of Council.
- 2)The Treasurer or their designee shall review all proposed gifts and bring to Council any that require Council's consideration.
- 3)Council or its designee shall only accept gifts that are legal and consistent with Plymouth's Mission, Bylaws, and policies.
- 4)Council or its designee may reject any gift it finds too restrictive in purpose or too difficult to administer, or inconsistent with Plymouth's mission.
- 5)Council shall seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts when appropriate and any costs of this analysis may be covered by the gift revenue.
- 6)Gifts that conflict with the mission of Plymouth as determined by Council will not be accepted.
- 7)All gifts shall be liquidated into cash and cash equivalents for investment and use according to the Gift Utilization Policy, unless a two-thirds majority of Council waives liquidation of a gift, in whole or in part, and sets conditions for future liquidation.
- 8)Plymouth does not provide tax or accounting advice to donors or their representatives. It is the sole responsibility of donors or their representatives to make those determinations.

#### **E.Compliance**

Plymouth shall comply with all state and federal law including Internal Revenue Service regulations and reporting requirements.

### **2.Gift Funds**

#### **A.Greater Plymouth Fund**

The Greater Plymouth Fund is a collection of unrestricted gifts, each of which is less than \$10,000.

#### **B.Standing Ministries Restricted Funds**

Each Standing Ministry Restricted Fund is a collection of restricted gifts, each of which is less than \$10,000. These funds include:

- 1)Children and Youth;
- 2)Facilities;
- 3)Fellowship;
- 4)Music and Fine Arts;
- 5)Service and Justice;
- 6)Worship; and



7)Other

### **C.Named Restricted Funds**

These funds are non-endowed but restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more.

### **D.Plymouth General Unrestricted Endowment Fund**

This fund contains gifts of any amount that the donor or grantor wishes to be endowed but for which the donor or grantor does not place any restriction on the use of the income.

### **E.Named Endowed Funds**

These funds are endowed gifts of \$10,000 or more. The use of the income may be restricted by the donor or grantor.

## **3.Gift Classifications**

### **A.Unrestricted Gifts**

These are gifts without donor restriction. They are made without any constraints on the specific use or purpose of their use.

- 1)All gifts are considered unrestricted by default, unless expressly designated and documented and otherwise meeting Plymouth's requirements for a restricted gift. This category includes gifts to Plymouth given in memory of a deceased individual that did not have a purpose specified.
- 2)Council Restricted Funds are created and controlled by Council. These gifts are \$10,000 or more and do not carry a restriction on spending the earnings or principal of the gift. These gifts are invested in the Greater Plymouth Fund. An annual draw from the Greater Plymouth Fund shall be taken in the same manner as an endowed fund.

### **B.Restricted Gifts**

These are gifts with donor restriction. The use or purpose of such gifts is constrained by donor or grantor request. These can be Non-Endowed or Endowed.

- 1)Non-Endowed Restricted Funds are gifts, the use or purpose of which is constrained by donor or grantor request but with the understanding that the principal will be spent. This category includes gifts to Plymouth given in memory of a deceased individual which are directed to support a specific ministry area of the church.
- 2)Endowed Funds are gifts that the donor or grantor requests to be treated as endowed or with the understanding of the donor or grantor that the principal will be invested and not spent. These gifts shall be administered according to the policies of the Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund. The use of income from endowed funds may be restricted or unrestricted.
- 3)Endowed Funds may be either:
  - a)Unrestricted Endowed Funds are restricted in that the principal will not be spent but unrestricted as to the use of the income by Plymouth; or
  - b)Restricted Endowed Funds are restricted in that both the principal may not be spent and the income is to be spent for a stated purpose.

## **4.Gift Allocation**

The Treasurer or their designee shall review and allocate gifts into accounts under the following gift fund categories. Council may make exceptions to dollar minimums in appropriate situations.

There are five broad fund categories:

- 1)Greater Plymouth Fund;
- 2)Council Restricted Fund;
- 3)Standing Ministries Restricted Funds;
- 4)Named Restricted Funds; and
- 5)Endowed Funds

### **B.Unrestricted Gifts**

- 1) Unrestricted gifts of less than \$10,000 shall be allocated to the Greater Plymouth Fund.
- 2) Unrestricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be allocated to the Council Restricted Fund.

### **C. Restricted Gifts**

- 1) Non-Endowed Restricted gifts less than \$10,000 shall be allocated to the appropriate restricted Standing Ministry Fund.
- 2) Non-Endowed Restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be set up as a new named restricted fund.
- 3) Endowed Unrestricted gifts shall be allocated to the general Plymouth Endowment Fund.
- 4) Endowed Restricted gifts less than \$10,000 shall be either allocated to the general Plymouth Endowment Fund or treated as a non-endowed restricted gift. If possible, the donor shall be asked for their preference.
- 5) Endowed Restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be set up as a new named endowment fund.

## **510.6.5. Gift Utilization**

### **1. Annual Reporting**

Council shall annually report non-budgeted receipts and disbursements made to or from a gift fund. Amounts of \$500 or more shall be itemized.

### **2. Funds**

#### **A. Greater Plymouth Fund**

- 1) This fund and its expenditures are directed by Council.
- 2) Expenditures should be for one-time expenses.
- 3) Any balance greater than \$10,000 at the end of a fiscal year may be transferred to the Council Restricted Fund at the discretion of Council.

#### **B. Council Restricted Fund**

- 1) This fund is to be managed as any other endowed fund except that Council may reverse the restriction designation on all or part of the fund at any time should needs or opportunities arise that would benefit the Church from the use of the funds.
- 2) Council may:
  - a) Spend the funds;
  - b) Place the funds in one or more Standing Ministry Fund,
  - c) Deposit the funds into the general endowment fund, or
  - d) Some combination of any of the above.
- 3) The earnings of the fund will be transferred annually to the Church to be recorded in Greater Plymouth Fund.

#### **C. Standing Ministries Restricted Funds**

- 1) These funds and their expenditures are directed by the Senior Pastor or designee in consultation with the relevant Standing Ministry Team.
- 2) An expenditure of \$1,000 or more from any fund requires Council approval unless they are included in the current annual budget.
- 3) Restricted Ministry gifts of \$1,000 or less should be spent within one year if feasible. If being saved for a specific project, a separate named restricted fund should be created by the Senior Pastor with Council approval.
- 4) Any balance greater than \$10,000 at the end of a fiscal year may be transferred to the Council Restricted Fund. The earnings will be transferred annually to the Church to be recorded in the appropriate Standing Ministry account.

#### **D. Named and Other Restricted Funds**

- 1) These funds and their expenditures are directed by the Senior Pastor or designee in consultation with the relevant Standing Ministry Team, if any.
- 2) An expenditure of \$1,000 or more from any fund requires Council approval.
- 3) Restricted funds shall be spent in accordance with donor restrictions except:
  - a) If future circumstances become so altered that the purposes and conditions under which a restricted fund is established and administered no longer pertain, or become a violation of current law, then Council may use the gift for another purpose within Plymouth that is as nearly as possible in keeping with the original intent of the donor(s).
  - b) If the balance of the fund declines to a point that it becomes impractical or uneconomical to continue administering it as a separate fund, Council may add the balance to a different fund with a similar purpose or move it into an unrestricted fund account.

### **E. Endowed Funds**

Endowed funds shall be utilized according to the policies of the Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund.

#### **510.6.6. Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund**

##### **1. Purpose**

The Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund (hereinafter the "Endowment") shall exist to enable individuals to be faithful stewards of God's gifts during and beyond their lifetimes and to enhance and expand the ministry and mission of Plymouth Church as expressed in the vision and hope of the Plymouth Covenant.

Endowed funds are gifts that the donor or grantor requests to be treated as endowed or with the understanding of the donor or grantor that the principal will be invested and not spent.

##### **2. Management**

- 1) The assets of the Endowment shall be segregated from other assets of Plymouth Church and be under the control and direction of Council and managed by Council's Finance Committee.
- 2) The Finance Committee shall provide Council with a quarterly report of Endowment assets.
- 3) Council shall provide the Congregation an annual report of Endowment assets and distributions.
- 4) Records of the assets shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted methods of fund accounting. Separate accounts shall be kept for separate funds within the Endowment. Funds may, however, be commingled for investment purposes.
- 5) The terms of each gift and of each fund shall be faithfully observed in their classification and in their management and disbursement except in extenuating circumstances.
- 6) Donors are encouraged to recognize that over the many years following the establishment of a restricted gift, the needs, policies, and circumstances of Plymouth can change in unforeseen ways. Council must have the flexibility to make use of funds in the best interest of Plymouth and yet in accord with donor interests and specifications. Thus, donors are advised to describe the specific purposes of their gifts as broadly as possible and to avoid detailed limitations and restrictions. Donors considering bequests for a specific purpose are encouraged to consult with Plymouth.

##### **3. Donor Intent**

Income from endowed funds shall be spent in accordance with donor restrictions except:

- 1) If future circumstances become so altered that the purposes and conditions under which an endowed fund is established and administered no longer pertain, or become a violation of current law, then Council may use the income from the fund for another purpose within Plymouth that is as nearly as possible in keeping with the original intent of the donor(s);

- 2) If the balance of the fund declines to a point that it becomes impractical or uneconomical to continue administering it as a separate fund, Council may add the balance to a different fund with a similar; or
- 3) If Council wishes to remove funds from endowed status, it shall ask for approval by a vote of the Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.

#### **4. Investment Policy**

- 1) The investment objectives for the Endowment shall be to preserve the inflation adjusted value of the Endowment and to maximize total returns.
- 2) Aside from cash balances, the Endowment's funds will be invested with the United Church Funds of the UCC in accordance with its current stated investment policy. Funds may be invested in a different designated fund management entity as approved by Council.
- 3) The Finance Committee shall regularly review the returns for the invested Endowment funds and any changes in the investment policy. The Finance Committee shall recommend appropriate changes to Council.

#### **5. Disbursements**

- 1) Annually, Council's Finance Committee shall:
  - a) Calculate an amount of up to 5% of the endowment fund average market value on September 30 of the current and the two prior years;
  - b) Recommend the appropriate amount to Council;
  - c) Provide information on the amount of income in each endowed account; and
  - d) Any restrictions which apply to the use of the income in each account.
- 2) Council will decide the appropriate amount.
- 3) Disbursement of funds shall be by the Treasurer or otherwise as directed by Council.
- 4) Council may, by a two-thirds vote, submit a written request to the Finance Committee for endowed funds to meet special needs. The Finance Committee will consider the request and provide Council with its recommendation on the appropriateness of the request.

## **520. Council**

### **520.3. Council Operation**

#### **520.3.3. Standing Ministries Communication**

- 1) The agenda for any regular meeting shall include a period for the chair, or a designee of the chair, of a Standing Ministry to address Council.
- 2) An at-large member of Council shall be assigned by the Moderator as a liaison for each Standing Ministry to promote communication with Council.

#### **520.3.4. Planning and Coordinating Sessions**

- 1) Council shall annually hold at least three planning and coordinating sessions with the chairs of Standing Ministries as well as representatives from any other appropriate church organization.
- 2) These sessions are an opportunity for a free exchange of the activities, plans, and goals of Council and represented groups.
- 3) The sessions may be held in conjunction with a regular Council meeting.

### **520.4. Council Duties**

#### **520.4.1. Council Member Expectations**

It is the expectation of Plymouth that each member of Council will:

- 1) Prepare for meetings;
- 2) Attend all meetings regularly;
- 3) Participate actively in meetings;

- 4) Make themselves familiar with Plymouth Constitution, Bylaws, and policies;
- 5) Invest the necessary time to understand the basic financial operation of Plymouth; and
- 6) Engage with the membership to provide information and gather feedback and input.

#### **520.4.2. Communication and Transparency**

Council shall encourage active communication with the membership and transparency in its actions in order to maintain the Congregation's understanding and support of our governance structure. This includes:

- 1) Maintaining an active process throughout the year for encouraging and receiving the views of members on church affairs;
- 2) Keeping the membership informed of Council activity; and
- 3) Ensuring that the Constitution, Bylaws, Policy Book, and Council activities are easily available to the membership.

#### **520.4.3. Goal Setting**

The Moderator-Elect shall annually lead an effort to develop proposed priority goals for the upcoming year for Council's consideration and approval.

### **520.5. Council Committees**

#### **520.5.3. Overview**

##### **A. Membership**

- 1) Unless otherwise stated in Bylaws or policy, membership on Council committees shall be limited to members of Plymouth but otherwise determined and appointed by Council.
- 2) The Moderator-elect will nominate members for available positions at the Council meeting prior to the Annual Meeting for its consideration. The nominees should represent the diversity of Plymouth.
- 3) The approved members shall be reported to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- 4) Unless otherwise stated, Council committees should have a member of Council as a member.

##### **B. Creating a Committee**

Council shall approve a policy for each new standing committee or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each ad hoc committee. The policy or MOU shall state the purpose and membership of the committee. For ad hoc committees, the MOU shall state its expected duration.

#### **520.5.4. Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee**

##### **A. Membership**

The Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee shall have six members who shall each serve three years. Two shall be appointed each year on a staggered schedule.

##### **B. Duties**

The Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee shall:

- 1) Coordinate and conduct an ongoing program for planned giving;
- 2) Develop and lead the Annual Appeal for pledges for the following year;
- 3) Review and evaluate the pledge system, communicate with members regarding the status of the pledges, and report regularly to Council on the status of pledge receipts;
- 4) Maintain records from past years for use in making seasonal projection and comparisons; and
- 5) Coordinate all fundraising efforts.
- 6) Consult with the Finance Committee to establish an annual fundraising target.

#### **520.5.5. Facilities Committee**

##### **A. Membership**

The Facilities Committee shall have six members who shall each serve three years. Two shall be appointed each year on a staggered schedule. The staff Facilities Manager or such other staff as appointed by the Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member.

**B.Duties**

The Facilities Committee shall:

- 1)Develop and update a long-range maintenance plan to maintain and improve buildings and properties of the Church;
- 2)Recommend to Council a policy on use of facilities and properties;
- 3)Evaluate periodically the decor of the Sanctuary and other church spaces to advise Council about the aesthetics of church space.

**520.5.6.Finance Committee****A.Membership**

The Finance Committee shall have five members. The Treasurer shall serve as chair. The Immediate Past Moderator shall serve as vice chair. The remaining three members shall be appointed by Council in consultation with the Treasurer and serve staggered three-year terms. The Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member without vote and may appoint an additional staff person to serve as an ex officio member without vote.

**B.Duties**

The Finance Committee shall:

- 1)Prepare and present accurate, timely, and meaningful financial statements to Council;
- 2)Help Council in its understanding of Plymouth's finances, including an annual tutorial explaining church finances and reporting and Council's fiduciary responsibilities;
- 3)Work with staff to develop and present initial draft budget to Council;
- 4)Ensure proper internal controls and accountability policies and procedures;
- 5)Recommend appropriate amount of surety bond to be paid by the Church for the Treasurer and any other volunteer or staff;
- 6)Review the adequacy, costs, and performance of the insurance program on an annual basis;
- 7)Ensure Plymouth's compliance with federal, state, and other reporting requirements;
- 8)Recommend appropriate audit or review;
- 9)Advise Council on any proposed adjustments to the budget as allowed by Bylaws before Council votes on such a motion; and
- 10)Recommend appointment by Council of additional Deputy Treasurers as needed.

**520.5.7.Governance Committee****A.Membership**

The Governance Committee shall have such members as Council decides is appropriate.

**B.Duties**

The Governance Committee shall:

- 1)Advise Council on developing, maintaining, and updating appropriate governing documents and practices;
- 2)Assist in drafting proposed changes to the Bylaws or policies or other governing documents;
- 3)Assist in making governing documents easily available to the membership;
- 4)Provide an annual introduction of Plymouth's governing documents to new members of Council; and
- 5)Oversee an annual review of Bylaws and policies.

**520.5.8.Personnel Committee****A.Membership**

The Personnel Committee shall have seven voting members made up of three at-large members appointed by Council, the Moderator, the Immediate-Past Moderator, the Moderator Elect, and the Senior Pastor. The Personnel Committee may go into executive session whenever necessary following the same requirements as for Council.

### **B.Duties**

The Personnel Committee shall:

- 1) Provide advice and feedback on personnel issues;
- 2) Assist the Senior Pastor in developing and revising recommended personnel policies to submit to Council for its consideration;
- 3) Ensure that the Senior Pastor or designated staff person maintains adequate personnel files, including current position descriptions;
- 4) Ensure that background checks are conducted on all applicants for church employment before employment begins;
- 5) Review all salary and benefit proposals in consultation with the Senior Pastor and Finance Committee, which in turn shall be submitted to Council for its approval; and
- 6) Conduct an annual performance review of the Senior Pastor, recommending to Council any adjustments in salary and benefits.

## **530. Governing and Operating Documents**

### **530.2. Policies**

#### **530.2.3. Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal**

Adoption, amendment, or repeal of policy requires:

- 1) That it be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws;
- 2) Approval by a majority of voting members attending a Council meeting with a quorum;
- 3) Publishing proposed language or deletion in the Council agenda at least two days prior to a meeting at which it will be considered; and
- 4) If passed on first consideration, second consideration at the following Council meeting unless approved by unanimous vote at first consideration.

## **540. General Governance**

### **540.6. Administrative Policies [Discrimination & Harassment are in Personnel]**

#### **540.6.1. Building Use**

Staff is responsible for scheduling use of the buildings and facilities and will ensure the use is consistent with the mission and policies of the Church.

#### **540.6.2. Code of Conduct**

- 1) Plymouth is committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior and promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, and integrity, as well as compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- 2) All members of Council, staff, and volunteers shall act with honesty, integrity, and openness in all their dealings as representatives of Plymouth and shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
- 3) All members of Council, staff, and volunteers shall also adhere to the following fundraising principles:

- a)Privileged or confidential Plymouth and donor information shall not be disclosed to unauthorized parties; and
  - b)Donor and prospect information created by, or on behalf of, Plymouth is the property of Plymouth and shall not be transferred or utilized except on behalf of Plymouth.
  - c)The parties authorized access to donor information are: the Senior Pastor, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Operations Manager, Staff Accountant and Administrative Assistant. This information may be shared with others only with the prior approval by vote of the Finance Committee.
- 4)Failure to follow these standards shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from Council, termination of employment for staff, dismissal from one's volunteer duties, as well as civil or criminal prosecution if and to the extent warranted.

### **540.6.3.Conflict of Interest**

#### **1.Overview**

- 1)It is the policy of Plymouth to avoid either the reality or the perception of conflicts of interest or self-dealing in executing its mission.
- 2)This policy is implemented by disclosure and recusal.
- 3)Any time a member of Council or key staff determines the need to disclose information or to recuse from a particular decision, that person has the right and obligation to disclose the perceived conflict and not to participate further in the relevant decision.
- 4)"Key Staff" shall mean each staff member with the ability to significantly influence the outcome of any business decision.

#### **2.Conflict of Interest**

- 1)A conflict of interest or opportunity for self-dealing arises when a member of Council or key staff can directly affect the outcome of a Plymouth decision regarding an entity in which the member of Council or key staff has a substantial interest.
- 2)All members of Council and key staff shall disclose relationships with any entity in which they, members of their immediate family, or organizations under their direction or control have such a substantial interest.

#### **3.Substantial Interest**

A substantial interest shall include:

- 1)Membership on the governing body;
- 2)An investment that exceeds a 5% ownership interest;
- 3)An ongoing business relationship; or
- 4)Any other circumstances that could significantly affect the member of Council's or key staff's ability to judge fairly the merits of a proposed business decision.

#### **4.Recusal**

- 1)No member of Council shall vote on an administrative or other business decision involving an entity with which the member of Council has a substantial interest.
- 2)When such a possibility arises, the member of Council shall inform the Moderator of the conflict of interest. The affected member of Council may then listen to the basic presentation of the matter to Council and may briefly provide any corrective information relevant to Council's ultimate decision.
- 3)After offering any such information, the member of Council with a conflict of interest shall leave the meeting and shall not participate further in the decision.
- 4)No key staff shall gather or analyze information, or make any presentation or recommendation to Council, regarding a decision involving an entity in which the key staff has a substantial interest.
- 5)If a key staff member is presented a matter involving such an affected entity, the staff member shall inform the Senior Pastor, the Moderator, or both, of the conflict.



6) Either the Senior Pastor or the Moderator shall then designate another, unaffected staff member as the person to supervise the matter from which the conflict has arisen, and the conflicted staff member shall not participate further in the decision.

#### 540.6.4. Document Retention and Destruction

##### 1. Overview

- 1) Plymouth takes seriously its obligation to preserve information relating to litigation, audits and investigations. Plymouth recognizes that it is a crime to alter, cover up, falsify, or destroy any document to prevent its use in an official proceeding
- 2) All Council members, employees, and volunteers shall preserve all information relating to official proceedings, including litigation, audits, and investigations. Failure to follow this standard shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from Council, termination of employment for Plymouth employees, dismissal from one's volunteer duties, as well as civil or criminal prosecution if and to the extent warranted.
- 3) Each employee has an obligation to notify Council of any potential or actual official proceedings involving Plymouth. Plymouth's Senior Pastor, in consultation with Council, shall maintain and comply with an appropriate document retention schedule, which shall assist Plymouth in complying with this Policy. The current schedule is shown below.

##### 2. Schedule

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	2 years
Bank statements	3 years
Checks (for important payments and purchases)	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes, and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Contract period
Corporate records	Permanently
Correspondence (general)	2 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Donor records	7 years
Duplicate deposit slips	2 years
Employment applications	3 years
Employment and termination agreements	Permanently
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	7 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)	Permanently

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventory records for products, materials, and supplies	3 years
Minutes, bylaws, policies, and resolutions	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Personnel files (terminated employees)	7 years after termination
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 years
Year-end financial statements	Permanently

#### 540.6.5. Disaster Plan

The Senior Pastor shall develop and maintain a plan to address any event that would disrupt the operations of Plymouth. Such plan shall include but not be limited to backup of electronic and paper records, password retention, and responsibility determination for various Plymouth members and staff.

#### 540.6.6. Naming of a Plymouth Program or Facility

Proposals for naming any Plymouth program or physical facility requires the approval of Council.

- 1) Members or Staff may make recommendations stating the:
  - a) Program or facility to be named;
  - b) Person or persons it is to be named for; and
  - c) Reasons for the naming proposal.
- 2) Proposals for naming any program or physical facility must be consistent with the mission of Plymouth.
- 3) The duration of naming is intended for the life of the specific program or entity unless otherwise stated.
- 4) The naming may be removed by Council if Council determines that significant changes have occurred to the program or facility or that the naming is no longer appropriate.

#### 540.6.7. Safe Church [an updated policy is being drafted by CE]

#### 540.6.8. Transition Plan

The Senior Pastor shall develop and maintain a plan to address the unexpected departure of staff or officers. This plan shall include the development of position handbooks for each staff detailing the duties and practices of each position.

#### 540.6.9. Whistleblower

Plymouth requires its members of Council, volunteers, and staff to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. To that end,

Plymouth will investigate any suspected illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct, or use or misuse of Plymouth's resources or property by members of Council, volunteers, or staff.

Members of Council, volunteers, and staff are encouraged to report suspected illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct (i.e., to be a "whistleblower"), pursuant to the procedures set forth below.

### **1. Definitions**

- 1) **Baseless Allegation:** A baseless allegation is an allegation which is known to be false, or an allegation made with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity. An individual making a baseless allegation is not considered a Whistleblower for purposes of this Policy, and may be subject to disciplinary action by Plymouth, including legal claims by Plymouth, and any person who is the subject of such baseless allegation.
- 2) **Illegal, Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct:** "Illegal, Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct" is any deliberate act or failure to act which is contrary to applicable law or which is made with the intention of obtaining an unauthorized benefit. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Forgery or unauthorized alteration of documents;
  - b) Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of computer files;
  - c) Fraudulent financial reporting;
  - d) Misappropriation or misuse of Plymouth's resources, such as funds, supplies, or other assets;
  - e) Authorizing or receiving compensation for goods not received or services not performed; and
  - f) Authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked.
- 3) **Whistleblower:** A "Whistleblower" is a member of Council, staff, or volunteer who informs the Moderator, any other member of Council, or the Senior Pastor about an activity relating to Plymouth which that person reasonably believes to be illegal, fraudulent or dishonest Conduct.

### **2. Reporting**

- 1) A person's concerns about possible illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest Conduct, or use or misuse of Plymouth's resources or property, should be reported to the Moderator or, if suspected by an employee, to the Senior Pastor, or, if suspected by a volunteer, to the staff member supporting or overseeing the volunteer's work.
- 2) If, for any reason, a person finds it difficult to report their concerns as directed by the foregoing paragraph, the person may report such concerns to any member of Council, who shall have an affirmative obligation to assure that such concerns are handled in a manner consistent with this Policy.
- 3) Reports may be submitted either orally or in writing.

### **3. Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **A. Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor is required to promptly report suspected illegal, fraudulent or dishonest conduct to the Moderator. Reasonable care should be taken in dealing with suspected misconduct to avoid:

- 1) Baseless allegations;
- 2) Premature notice to persons suspected of misconduct or disclosure of suspected misconduct to others not involved with the investigation; and
- 3) Violation of any person's rights under applicable law.

#### **B. Investigation**

All relevant matters, including suspected but unproved matters, will be reviewed and analyzed, with documentation of the receipt, retention, investigation and treatment of the report. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, if necessary, and a response will be communicated back to the Whistleblower and, to the extent applicable, the Senior Pastor.

Where appropriate to assure objectivity or confidentiality, or because of other appropriate considerations, Plymouth may engage an independent person (such as an attorney, auditor, or private investigator) to conduct the investigation.

### **C. Whistleblower Protection**

Plymouth will protect Whistleblowers as defined below.

- 1) Plymouth will use reasonable efforts to protect Whistleblowers against retaliation. In particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, each Whistleblower's report will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances and by applicable law. Generally, this means that a Whistleblower's report will only be shared with those who have a need to know so that Plymouth can conduct an effective investigation, determine what action to take based on the results of any such investigation, and, in appropriate cases, with law enforcement personnel. Should disciplinary or legal action be taken against a person or persons as a result of a Whistleblower's report, such persons may also have right to know the identity of the Whistleblower.
- 2) No member of Council, volunteer, or staff of Plymouth may retaliate against a Whistleblower for reporting any conduct which that person believes to be illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest with the intent or effect of adversely affecting the terms or conditions of the Whistleblower's employment, including but not limited to, threats of physical harm, loss of job, punitive work assignments, or effect on salary or fees. The foregoing policy against retaliation shall not apply to a baseless allegation, as above defined.
- 3) Any Whistleblower who believes that they have been retaliated against may file a written complaint with the Moderator. Any such complaint of retaliation will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective measures taken if allegations of retaliation are substantiated. This protection from retaliation is not intended to prohibit any Plymouth official from taking action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of such official's duties and based on valid performance-related factors.
- 4) Anyone reporting conduct as described under this policy must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the knowledge that the allegations are false, may be viewed as a disciplinary offense and may, among other things, result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.

## **540.7. History and Heritage**

### **540.7.3. History Committee**

#### **A. Membership**

- 1) Council shall annually appoint with no limitation on the number of terms a Church Historian.
- 2) The Church Historian shall form a History Committee, comprised of as many members as appropriate. The Church Historian shall chair the Committee.

#### **B. Purpose**

The History Committee shall promote the preservation, appreciation, understanding, and utilization of the history and heritage of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ

#### **C. Responsibilities**

The History Committee shall:

- 1) Provide proper procedures for conservation, arrangement, and storage for Church records and artifacts of historical value. This includes the placement of records in office files and in the History Committee files as well as the timely deposit of records in the archives at Spencer Research Library;
- 2) Help create or retain records of important current events in the life of the Church,
- 3) Compile information needed to gain a knowledge and understanding of the history of Plymouth Church (including the lives of its members) and of the United Church of Christ;

- 4) Present information and interpretations of the history of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ;
- 5) Assist persons in the study of Church records; and
- 6) Such other activities appropriate for their purpose.

## **540.8. Speaking in the Name of Plymouth**

### **540.8.3. Advocacy, Lobbying, and Partisan Activity**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1) In pursuit of its Covenant, "...the service of all...the promotion of justice...the reign of peace...and the realization of our shared humanity," Plymouth members act both individually and collectively to accomplish its social mission.
- 2) Periodically, activities in the greater society conflict with what our Christian faith calls us to support and work to achieve.
- 3) In such incidents, it may become desirable for Plymouth to speak collectively and with one voice by adopting issue position statements. It may also be desirable, when necessary and desirable, to engage in lobbying of appropriate legislative bodies.
- 4) Plymouth does not engage in partisan activity.

#### **2. Advocacy**

##### **A. Definition**

Advocacy is speaking in behalf of another. It is standing with or standing for a person or group that is disadvantaged or denied justice in society. It is for the integrity of creation, justice, and peace. It is to change attitudes, behaviors, and policies that perpetuate injustice and deny God's will for all creation to flourish. It is speaking with and for the poor, the stranger, and the oppressed.

##### **B. General**

- 1) Plymouth shall encourage and facilitate ongoing education and discussions within Plymouth regarding greater justice in our community.
- 2) Advocacy is a part of Plymouth's efforts to directly assist those in need.
- 3) Members of Plymouth are encouraged to engage in meaningful ways to further the mission of Plymouth's support of greater justice in our community. All are free to determine their areas and method of support as individuals.
- 4) Staff and moderator, or other individuals in lay leadership positions, when communicating outside of Plymouth and identifying as their roles, should clarify that they are speaking for themselves and not the Church unless with prior approval by Council to speak on behalf of Plymouth.

##### **C. Mission and Service Board Priorities [need to change to reflect new ministry name]**

- 1) The Mission and Service Board may provide Council with an annual list of its top priorities for social justice issues.
- 2) The Mission and Service Board shall ensure that the mission and goals of Plymouth are reflected and prioritized.
- 3) No approval is required of Council as the list reflects only the priorities of the Mission and Service Board.

##### **D. Issue Position Statements in the Name of Plymouth**

- 1) As used in this policy, "in the name of Plymouth" includes:

- a) Stating explicitly that an opinion reflects that of Plymouth Church.
  - b) Using Plymouth communication channels to issue a statement without noting that the statement does not necessarily reflect the views of Plymouth.
  - c) Using the name "Plymouth," the Plymouth logo, or part of the Plymouth logo in such a way that a reasonable person would assume Plymouth Church supports a communication.
- 2) Using a church-provided banner at a rally, march, or other gathering in such a way that a reasonable person would assume Plymouth supports the message of the gathering.
  - 3) Issue position statements given in the name of Plymouth must have the prior approval of Council.
  - 4) The draft issue position statement shall be submitted to the Clerk.
  - 5) Council shall publish the draft issue position statement at least two weeks before the meeting at which it shall consider the request.
  - 6) Council shall provide a process to allow Plymouth members to ask questions and provide input for any issue position statement request prior to its consideration.

### **E. Council Considerations**

Factors used by Council in evaluating a draft issue position statement shall include the following:

- 1) Any relevant existing, broader declaration or statement agreed to by Council or the Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.
- 2) Resolutions and statements adopted by the national UCC or the Kansas Oklahoma Conference.
- 3) The mission and goals of Plymouth.
- 4) Mission and Service Board's list of priorities for social justice issues.
- 5) The diverse views held by Plymouth members.
- 6) Whether the request warrants consideration by the full Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.

## **3. Lobbying**

### **A. Definitions**

- 1) **Lobbying:** Attempting to influence legislation. Lobbying is a subset of Advocacy. Lobbying does not include conducting educational meetings, preparing and distributing educational materials, or otherwise considering or speaking on public policy issues in an educational manner.
- 2) **Legislation:** Includes federal, state, or local acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items (such as legislative confirmation of appointive office), or public referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. It does not include actions by executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.
- 3) **Attempting to influence legislation:** Includes contacting, or urging the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation.
- 4) **Substantial:** Not explicitly defined but is generally viewed as less than 5% of Plymouth's activities. In general, Plymouth may not spend a substantial part of its activities in attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying). Plymouth may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.

### **B. Lobbying Requests**

- 1) All lobbying done in the name of Plymouth, or any authorized subgroup, must be approved by Council.
- 2) This prior approval is to ensure that:
  - a) Plymouth does not spend a substantial amount of its activities lobbying; and
  - b) The lobbying request represents the views of Plymouth.
- 3) Any member or group of members requesting approval of lobbying shall submit a written proposal to the Clerk. The proposal shall include a short policy statement on the issue and the nature of the requested lobbying.

- 4) Council shall publish the draft of any request for lobbying at least two weeks before the meeting at which it shall consider the lobbying request.
- 5) Council shall provide a process to allow Plymouth members to ask questions and provide input for any request for lobbying.

### **C. Council Considerations**

Factors used by Council in evaluating a lobbying request shall include the following:

- 1) Current IRS regulations regarding churches and lobbying.
- 2) The percent of Plymouth's activity that would be spent in lobbying.
- 3) Any relevant existing, broader declaration or statement agreed to by Council or the Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.
- 4) How long a lobbying request will be valid.
- 5) The mission and goals of Plymouth.
- 6) Mission and Service Board's list of priorities for social justice issues.
- 7) The diverse views held by Plymouth members.
- 8) Whether the request warrants consideration by the full Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.

### **4. Partisan Activity**

Plymouth is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization pursuant to the Internal Revenue Service.

Accordingly, Plymouth:

- 1) Is neutral regarding political parties, political platforms, and candidates for political office. Plymouth does not endorse any political party or candidate. Nor does it advise members how to vote; and
- 2) Staff and moderator shall not make partisan comments in official Plymouth publications or at official Plymouth functions.

### **540.9. Delegates to the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference**

Lay delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for three-year overlapping terms. The number of delegates is determined annually by quotas for local congregations, established by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. In addition to those delegates, the Moderator and Moderator-Elect shall be counted among the quota of lay delegates. The pastors of the Congregation holding ministerial standing in the Kansas Oklahoma Conference shall be clergy delegates.

## 600.Ministries

### 610.Purpose and Operation

#### 610.1.Standing Ministries Composition and Procedures

- 1)Each Standing Ministry shall have six voting members unless stated otherwise in the **policy**. There may be as many additional non-voting team members as needed.
- 2)Voting members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for three-year overlapping terms. Vacancies shall be filled by **Council** appointment for the unexpired portion of the term, subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting if the unexpired term exceeds one year.
- 3)A voting member vacancy shall be declared by Council for three unexcused absences in a year.
- 4)Each Standing Ministry shall **collaborate with** a staff member designated by the Senior Pastor.
- 5)At the first meeting of each Standing Ministry following the Annual Meeting, a chair, vice-chair, and secretary shall be elected from among the voting membership. The vice-chair shall normally assume the chair the following year, subject to a vote of the Standing Ministry.
- 6)Each Standing Ministry chair shall work with the assigned staff person in coordinating the efforts of the Ministry.
- 7)**Each Standing Ministry is encouraged to send a representative to attend each Council meeting to report back to the Standing Ministry on Council action.**
- 8)Each Standing Ministry shall hold such meetings as necessary to fulfill its purpose. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by written request of at least two voting members of the Ministry.
- 9)Each Standing Ministry shall keep appropriate records and documents, such as attendance and minutes, which shall be transmitted to the Senior Pastor or designee in a continuing and timely manner for distribution to Council.
- 10)All Standing Ministry meetings are open to the members of Plymouth Church.
- 11)The designated staff member, in consultation with the relevant Standing Ministry is authorized to spend funds allocated to the Standing Ministry's use in the budget on any item necessary to fulfill their mission subject to limits and restrictions in the Bylaws or other policy. Funds cannot be used for personnel expenses.
- 12)A Standing Ministry may not sequester budgeted funds in a given budget year for use in a future year without the prior approval of the Finance Committee. Blanket approval to sequester funds will not be given. Approval to sequester funds will normally require that the use of the funds be for a specific project or activity and that this project or activity is not funded in the budget for the next year.

#### 610.2.Planning and Coordinating Sessions

- 1)**Council shall annually hold at least three planning and coordinating sessions with the chairs of Standing Ministries as well as representatives from any other appropriate church organization.**
- 2)**These sessions are an opportunity for a free exchange of the activities, plans, and goals of Council and represented groups.**
- 3)**The sessions may be held in conjunction with a regular Council meeting.**

### 620.Standing Ministries

#### 620.1.Established Standing Ministries

##### 620.1.1.Christian Education

The Christian Education Ministry shall **work with** staff **in coordinating and developing** the church school and other educational programs designed for persons of all ages.



### 620.1.2. Deacons

The Deacons Standing Ministry shall **work with staff in coordinating and developing** ministries that nurture the spiritual growth and care of the Congregation.

### 620.1.3. Fellowship

The Fellowship Standing Ministry shall **work with staff in coordinating and developing** ministries that nurture and develop our congregational community.

### 620.1.4. Membership

The Membership Standing Ministry shall **work with staff in coordinating and developing** ministries that promote and sustain membership. This shall include maintenance of membership rolls.

### 620.1.5. Music and Fine Arts

The Music and Fine Arts Ministry shall **work with staff in coordinating and developing** ministries that promote music and other art for the worship services, and nurture spiritual growth and enrichment of the Plymouth membership through the arts in additional ways. **Music and Fine Arts shall have nine members.**

### 620.1.6. Service and Justice

The Service and Justice Standing Ministry shall **work with staff in coordinating and developing** ministries that promote the service and justice priorities of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ in the world.

## 630. Ministry Teams

Each Ministry Team shall have a written Team Formation Agreement (TFA). The TFA shall include:

- 1) Purpose of the Ministry Team;
- 2) Staff member serving as either leader, coordinator, or contact;
- 3) **Council committee, Standing Ministry, or staff through which** they will operate for Council and budget purposes;
- 4) At least three members agreeing to coordinate with staff and other members;
- 5) A list of financial, staff, and space resources that will be needed;
- 6) Its expected length of operation, which can include "indefinite";
- 7) **Acceptance of rules of operation including complying with all Bylaws and policies;** and
- 8) Recognition that the Ministry Team will need to be renewed each year if it wishes to continue for more than a year.

## 740. Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook

The Plymouth Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook is a collection of policies adopted by Council and placed in a separate collection maintained along with this general policy book. [we could insert the two-page table of contents]

# 1000. Resolutions

## 1000. Resolutions by Year

### 1000.2004. Open and Affirming

We declare Plymouth Congregational Church to be an Open and Affirming Church, welcoming all persons, regardless of gender, race, physical or mental ability, economic status, marital status, age or sexual orientation. We affirm that persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans-gendered share with all others the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God. Therefore, this congregation joyfully and unequivocally welcomes all to share in the life and leadership, ministry,

fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our community of faith.

Adopted April 18, 2004, at a Called Congregational Meeting